

Claims

We claim:

1. A method for comparing free time for members of a chat, comprising:
 - storing individual calendars corresponding to each member of the chat;
 - initiating a free time comparison; and
 - combining the individual calendars corresponding to each member of the chat into a free time summary calendar, wherein the free time summary calendar indicates at least one of free time periods that are simultaneously available to all of the members of the chat and conflict time periods during which at least two chat members simultaneously have an event scheduled.
2. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
 - providing each member of the chat with a chat interface, wherein the chat interface allows at least one chat member to initiate the free time comparison.
3. The method of claim 1, wherein the free time summary calendar indicates free time periods and conflict time periods in a format selected from the group consisting of a day view format, week view format, and month view format.
4. The method of claim 3, wherein the day view format and the week view format indicate free time periods and conflict time periods during a predetermined time span.
5. The method of claim 3, wherein the day view format and the week view format indicate free time periods that are simultaneously available to all of the members of the chat.

6. The method of claim 3, wherein the month view indicates free days during which there is at least one simultaneously available free time period for all of the members of the chat, and conflict days during which there are no simultaneously available free time periods for all of the members of the chat.

7. The method of claim 3, further comprising:

switching between the day view format, week view format, and month view format.

8. A system for comparing free time for members of a chat, comprising:

a storage unit for storing individual calendars corresponding to each member of the chat;

a system for initiating a free time comparison;

a free time summary calendar system for combining the individual calendars

corresponding to each member of the chat into a free time summary calendar, wherein the free time summary calendar indicates at least one of free time periods that are simultaneously available to all of the members of the chat and conflict time periods during which at least two chat members simultaneously have an event scheduled; and
a display for displaying the free time summary calendar.

9. The system of claim 8, wherein the system for initiating a free time comparison comprises a chat interface.

10. The system of claim 8, wherein the free time summary calendar indicates free time periods and conflict time periods in a format selected from the group consisting of a day view format, week view format, and month view format.

11. The system of claim 10, wherein the day view format and the week view format indicate free time periods and conflict time periods during a predetermined time span.

12. The system of claim 10, wherein the day view format and the week view format indicate free time periods that are simultaneously available to all of the members of the chat.

13. The system of claim 10, wherein the month view indicates free days during which there is at least one simultaneously available free time period for all of the members of the chat, and conflict days during which there are no simultaneously available free time periods for all of the members of the chat.

14. A chat interface for comparing free time for members of a chat, the interface comprising:

a section for displaying contents of the chat;

a section for entering data into the chat;

a mechanism for initiating a free time comparison, wherein the free time comparison includes combining the individual calendars corresponding to each member of the chat into a free time summary calendar, wherein the free time summary calendar indicates at least one of free time periods that are simultaneously available to all of the members of the chat and conflict time periods during which at least two chat members simultaneously have an event scheduled; and a section for displaying the free time summary calendar.

15. The chat interface of claim 14, wherein the free time summary calendar indicates free time periods and conflict time periods in a format selected from the group consisting of a day view format, week view format, and month view format.

16. The chat interface of claim 14, further comprising:

a mechanism for switching between the day view format, week view format, and month view format.

17. A program product stored on a recordable medium for comparing free time for members of a chat, which when executed comprises:

program code for storing individual calendars corresponding to each member of the chat;

program code for initiating a free time comparison; and

program code for combining the individual calendars corresponding to each member of the chat into a free time summary calendar, wherein the free time summary calendar indicates at least one of free time periods that are simultaneously available to all of the members of the chat and conflict time periods during which at least two chat members simultaneously have an event scheduled.

18. The program product of claim 17, further comprising:

program code for providing each member of the chat with a chat interface, wherein the chat interface allows at least one chat member to initiate the free time comparison.

19. The program product of claim 17, wherein the free time summary calendar indicates free time periods and conflict time periods in a format selected from the group consisting of a day view format, week view format, and month view format.

20. The program product of claim 19, wherein the day view format and the week view format indicate free time periods and conflict time periods during a predetermined time span.

21. The program product of claim 19, wherein the day view format and the week view format indicate free time periods that are simultaneously available to all of the members of the chat.

22. The program product of claim 19, wherein the month view indicates free days during which

there is at least one simultaneously available free time period for all of the members of the chat, and conflict days during which there are no simultaneously available free time periods for all of the members of the chat.

23. The program product of claim 17, further comprising:

program code for switching between the day view format, week view format, and month view format.